

FIONA STAPLES
BRIAN K. VAUGHAN



CHAPTER
TWENTY
NINE

Saga

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Saga

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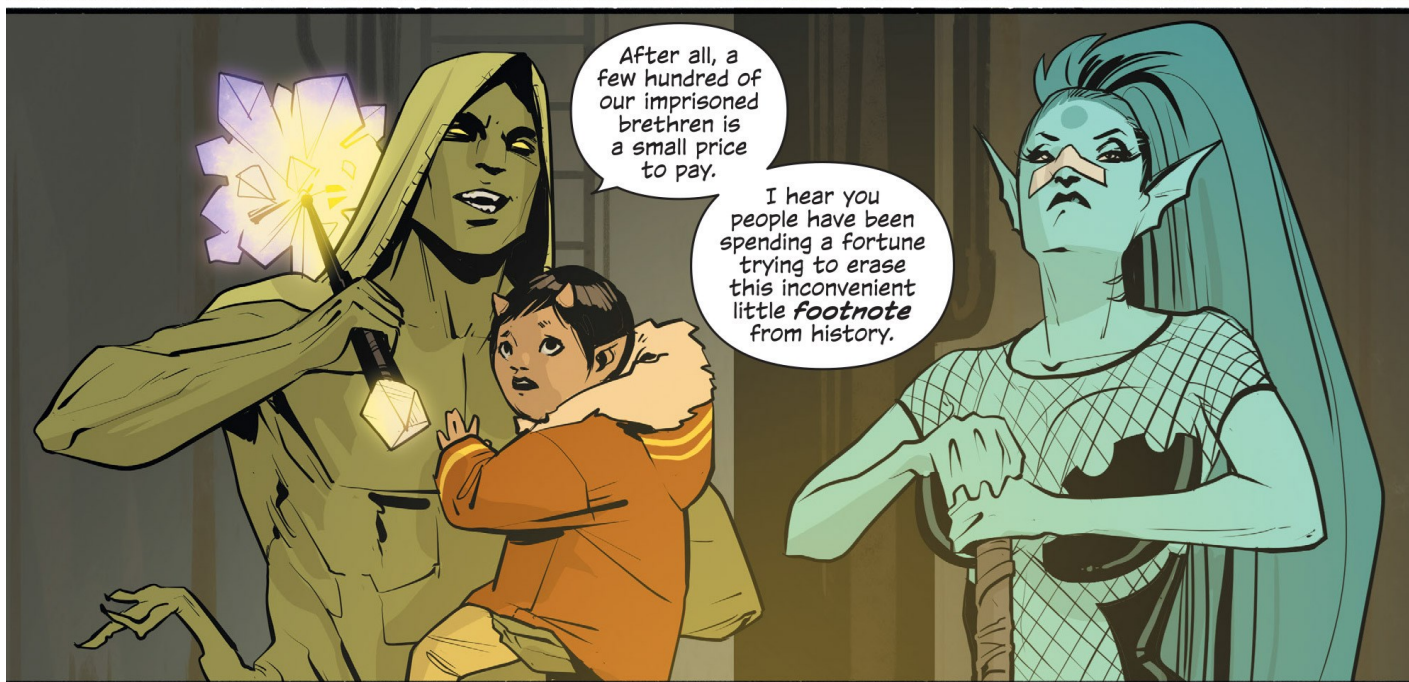
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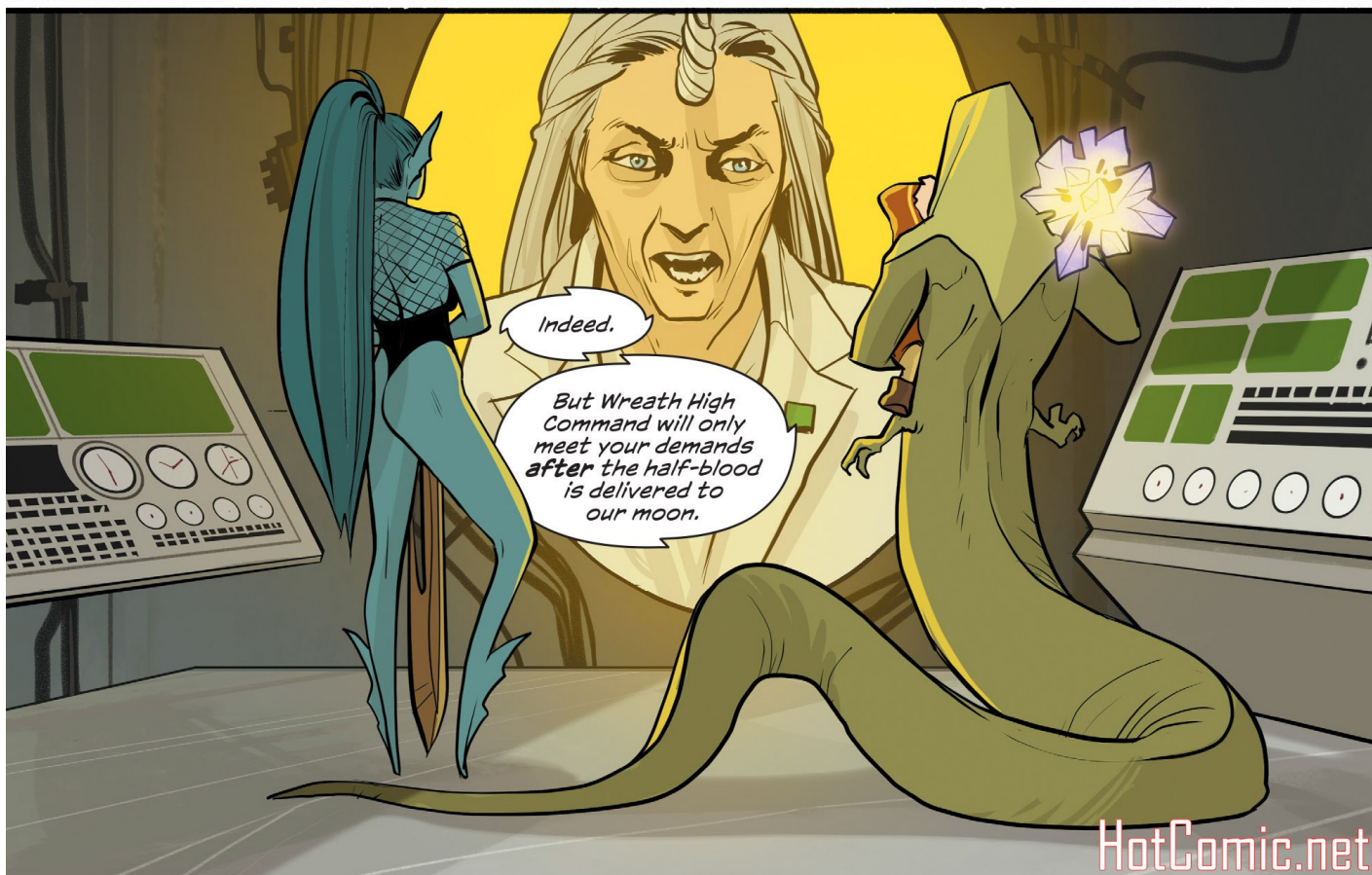


Cutting to the chase: do we have a deal or not?



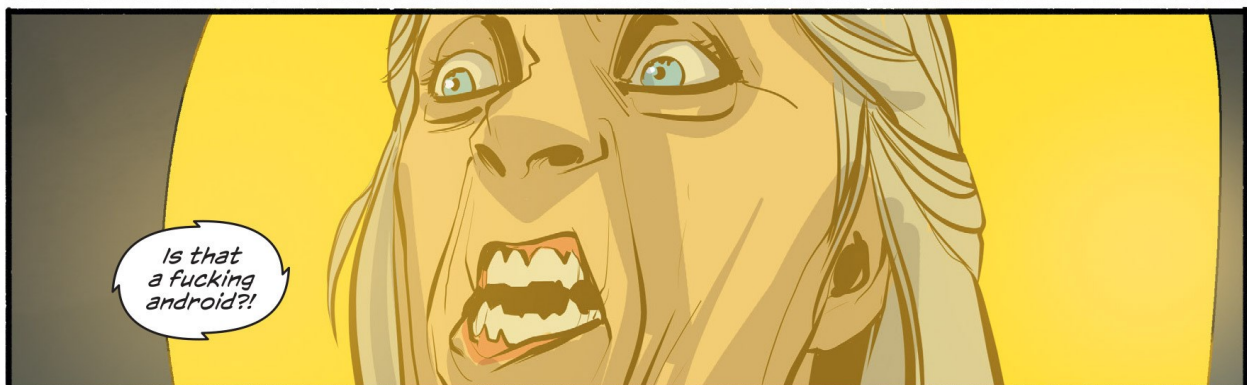
After all, a few hundred of our imprisoned brethren is a small price to pay.

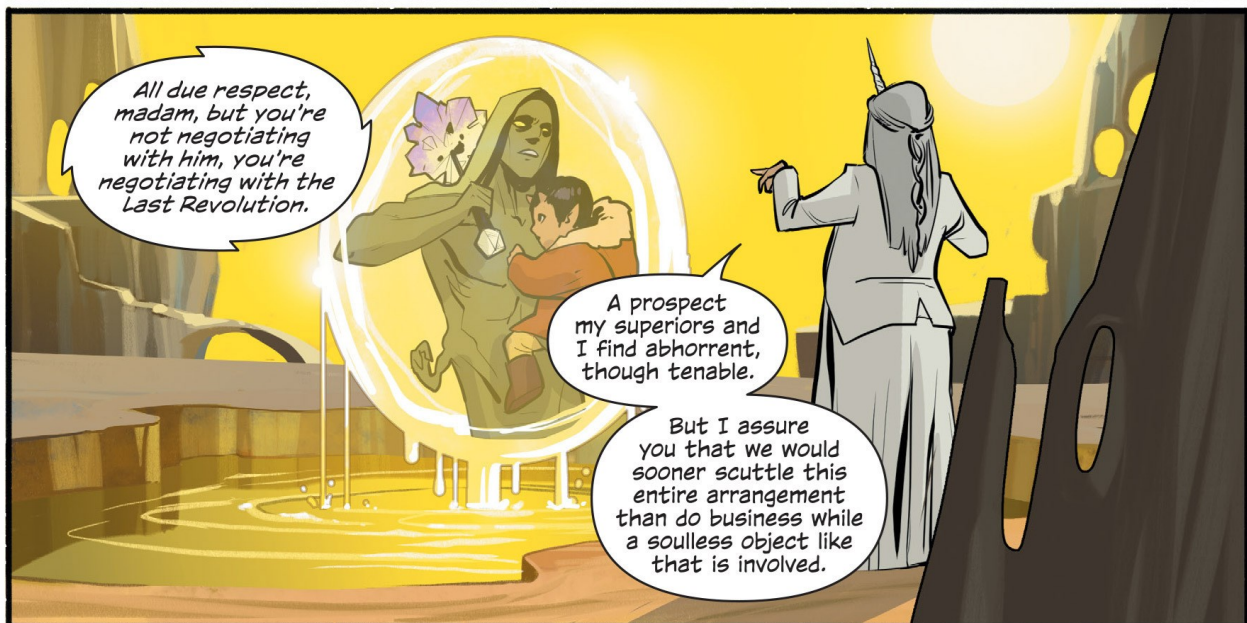
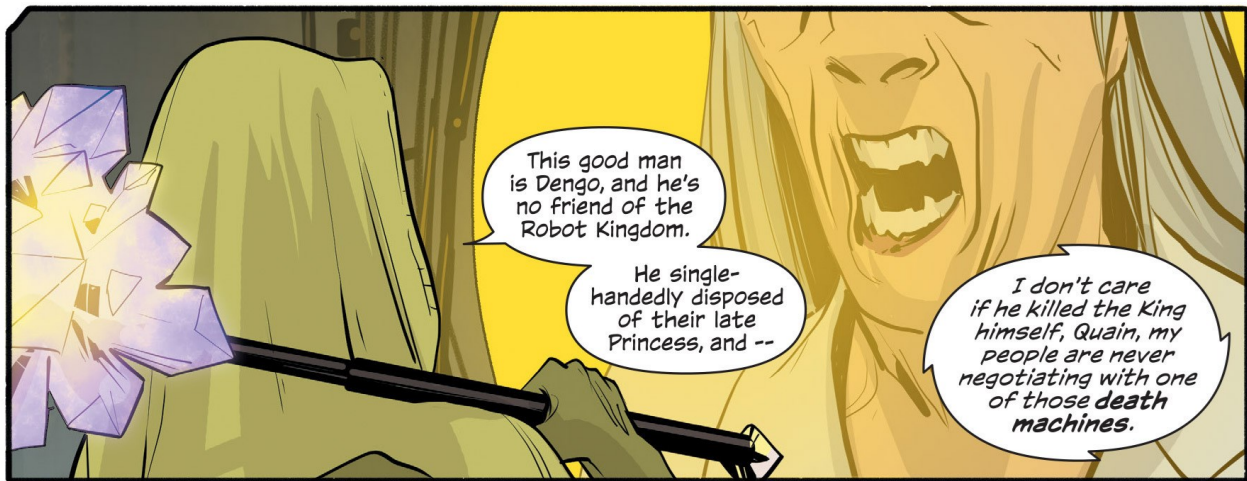
I hear you people have been spending a fortune trying to erase this inconvenient little *footnote* from history.



Indeed.

But Wreath High Command will only meet your demands *after* the half-blood is delivered to our moon.





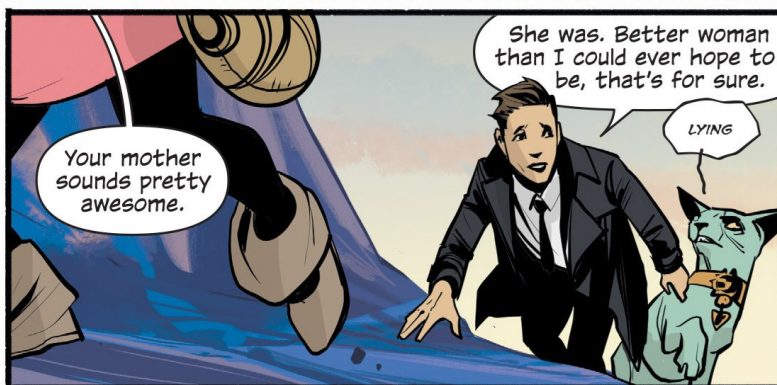
Parents give up so much: time, sleep,
freedom, money, intimacy...

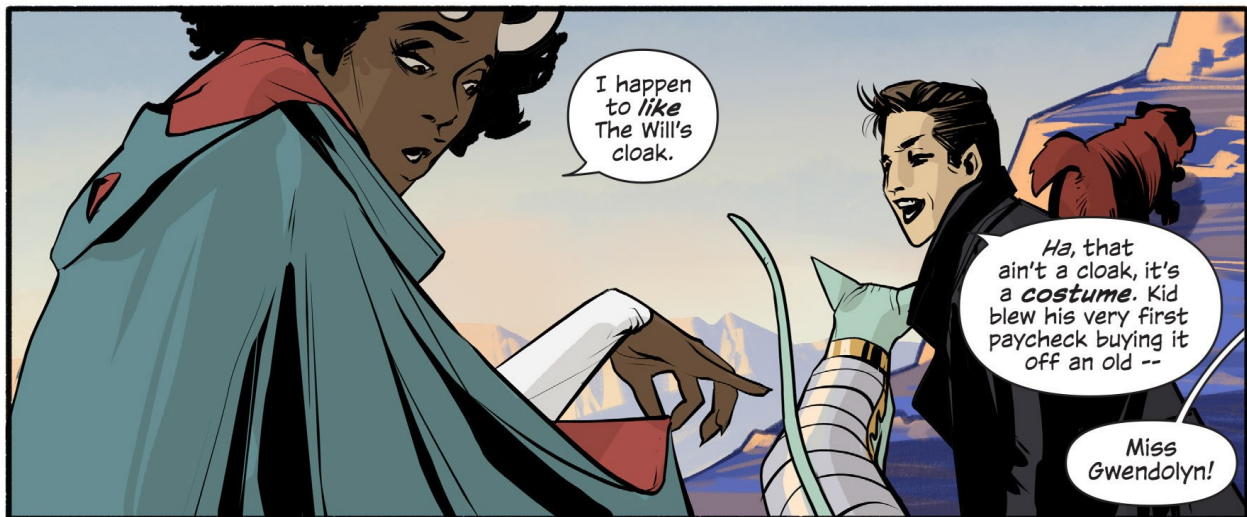
...pretty much
everything but
complaining about
how much they
sacrifice.

Are
we there
yet?

Sophie, if
you ask one more
time, I swear on
your cat I'm going
to throw you
off a cliff.

Relax, the
Smiling Cave
should be just
up ahead.









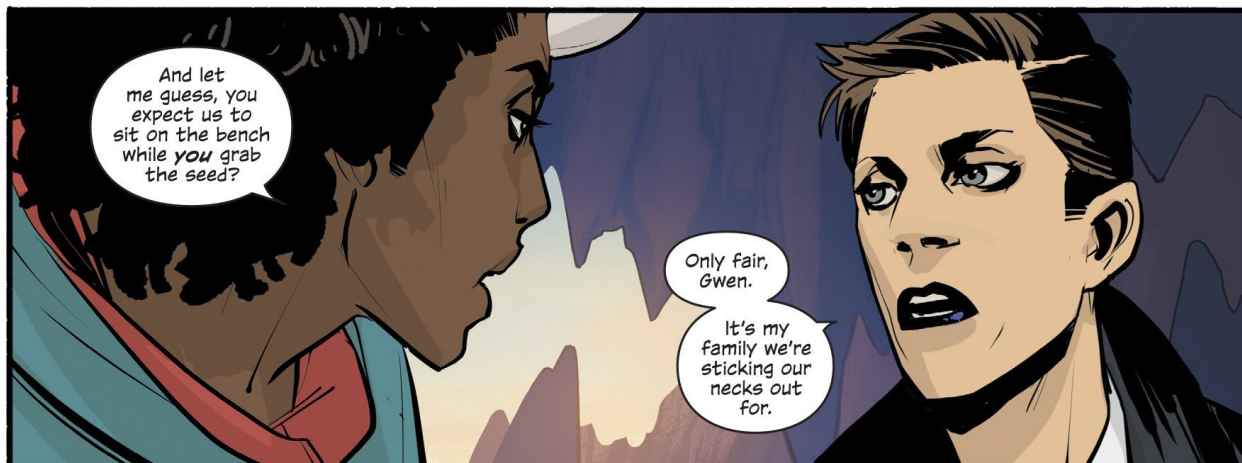
It's a boy,
all right.



This might
be easier than
we thought.

If that beast
is like most guys,
he'll fall *fast asleep*
after he finishes, and
then we just scoop
up the goods.

No point in
all of us clogging
down there and
waking him.



And let
me guess, you
expect us to
sit on the bench
while *you* grab
the seed?

Only fair,
Gwen.

It's my
family we're
sticking our
necks out for.



But it's *my*
fault The Will got
hurt in the first
place. Besides, I'm
way lighter on my
feet than you. Let
me grab his
medicine.

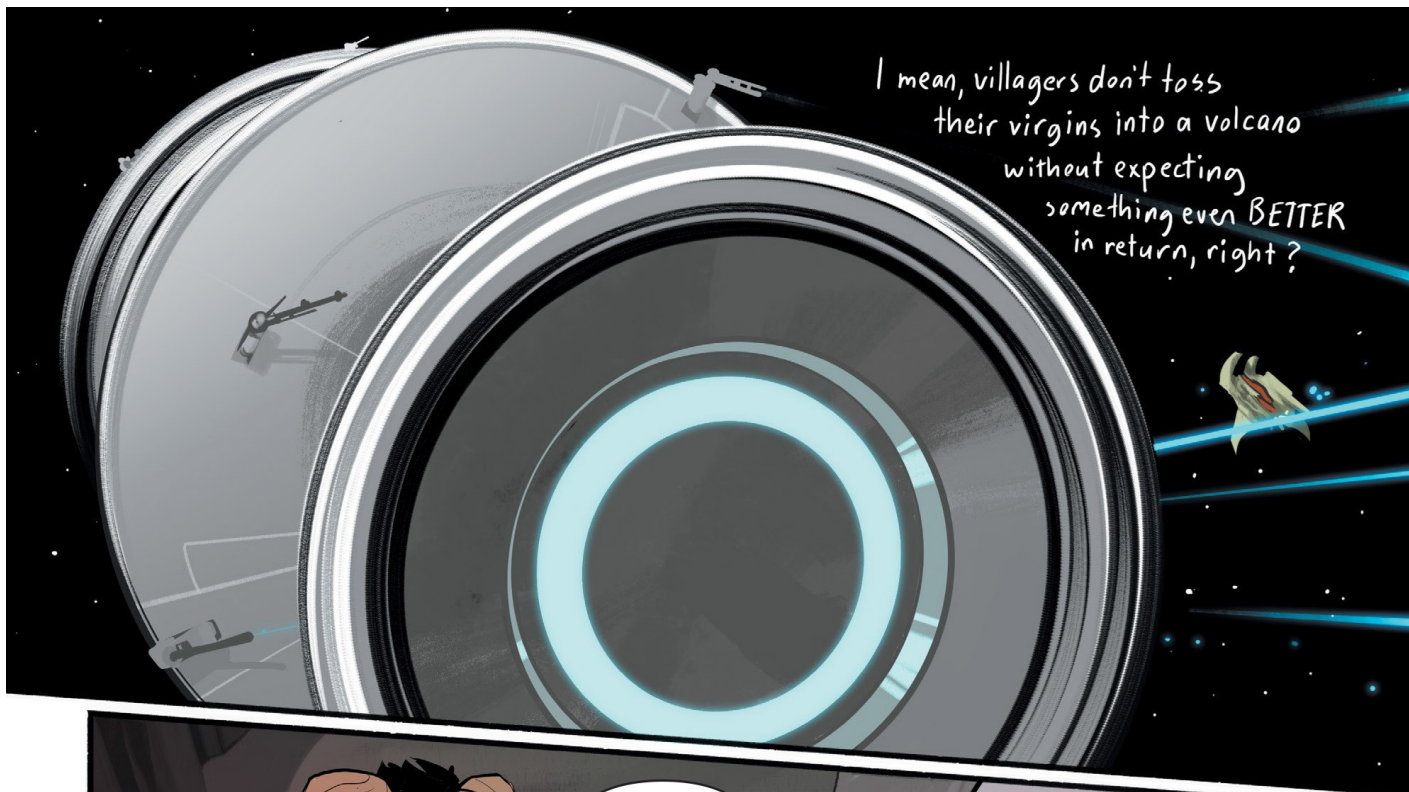
Thanks
for the offer,
but I'm gonna
be fine.

Right,
kitty?

MRRR



But here's the secret
about most sacrifices...
there's nothing selfless
about them at all.



I mean, villagers don't toss
their virgins into a volcano
without expecting
something even **BETTER**
in return, right?



There goes
our magnetic
field! Another
hit and we're
dead!

No
cunting shit,
Marko!

But I can't
move this thing
without engines,
and the engines
are worthless
without...

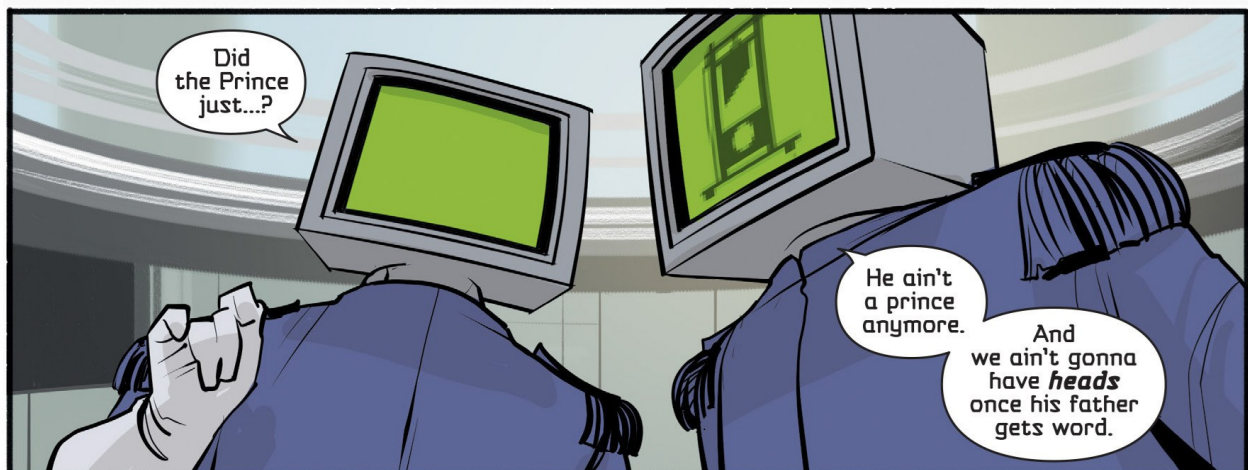
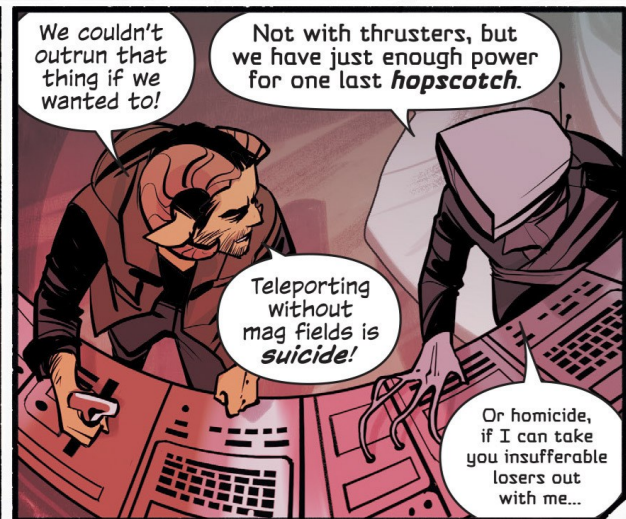
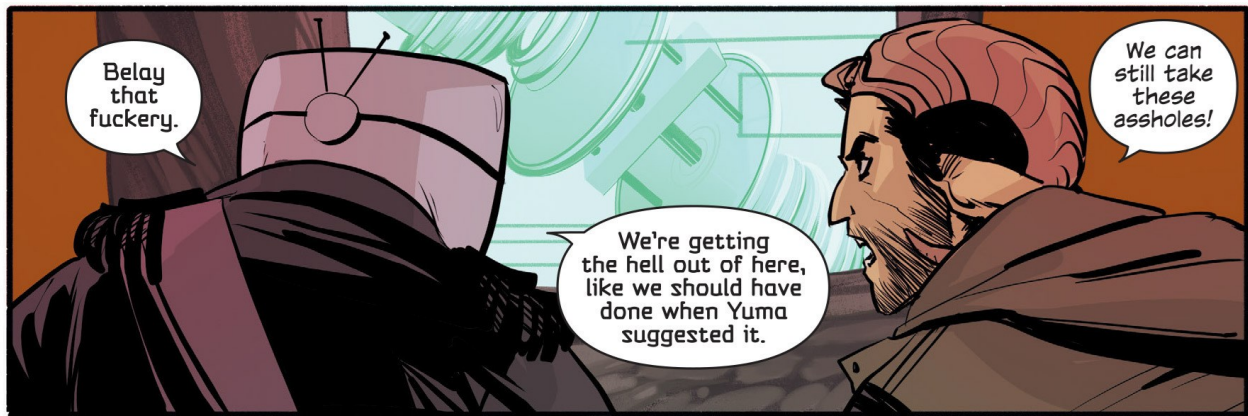


...fuel!

We're out of
the red! Those two
mouth-breathers
must have actually
repaired the line!

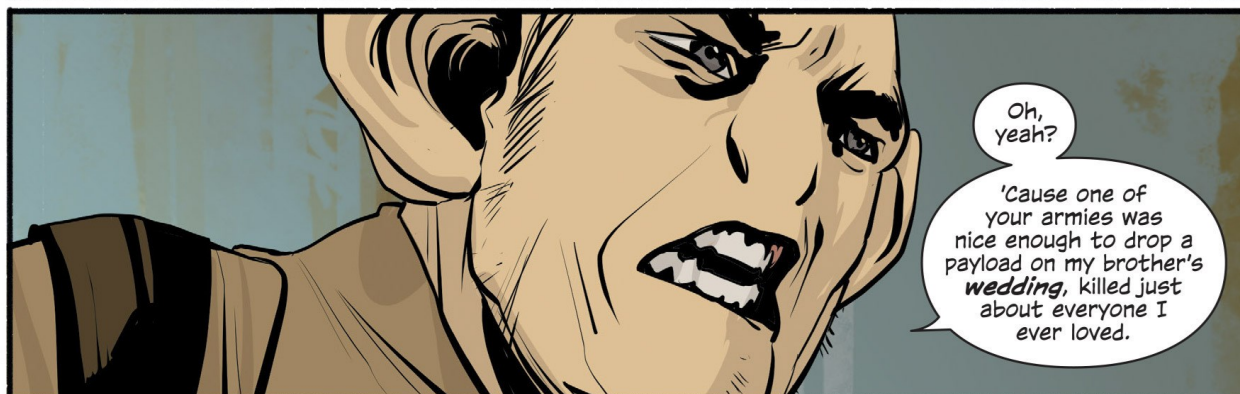
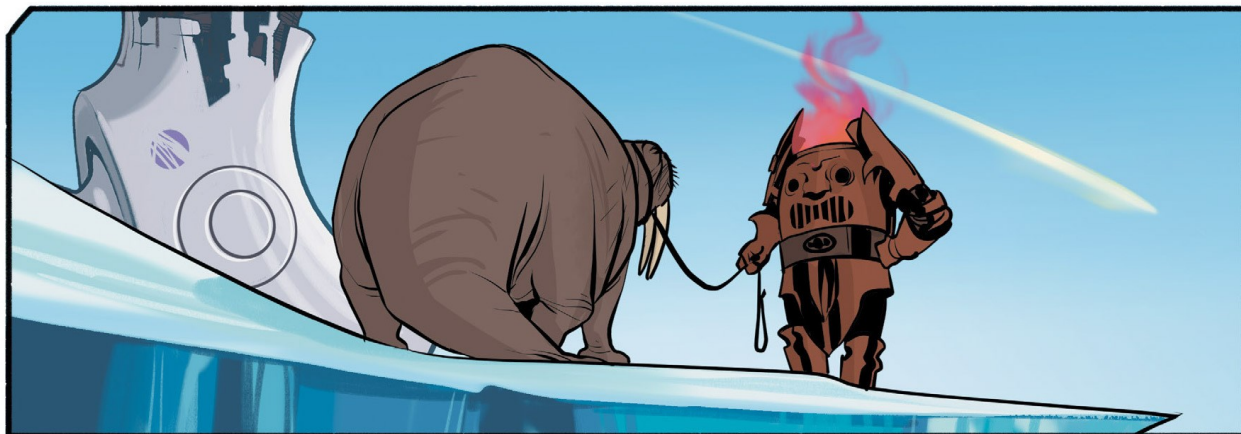


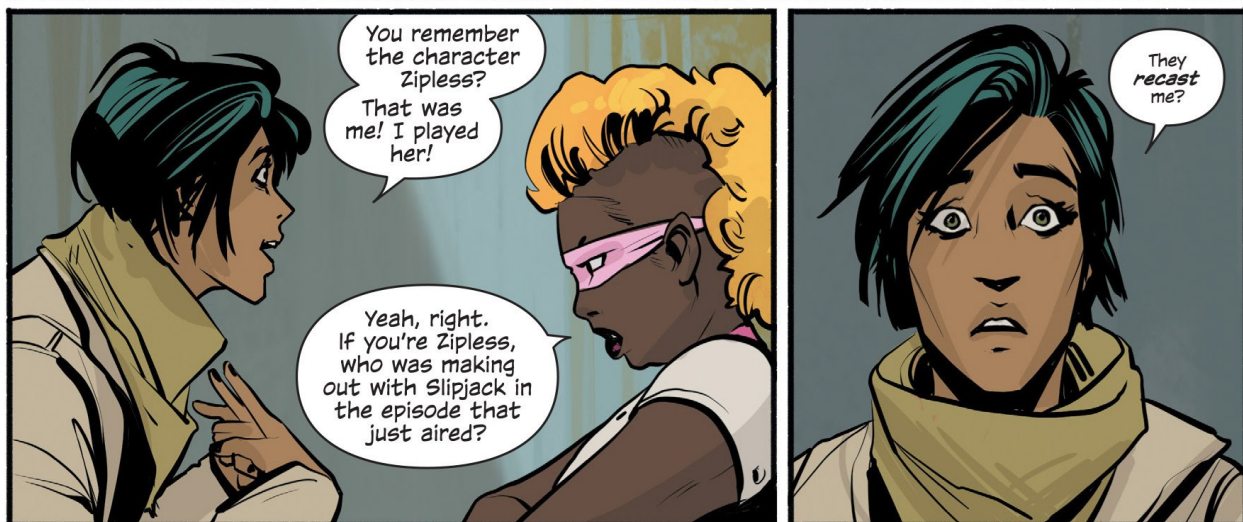
Then quit
celebrating and
move us back
into attack
position.

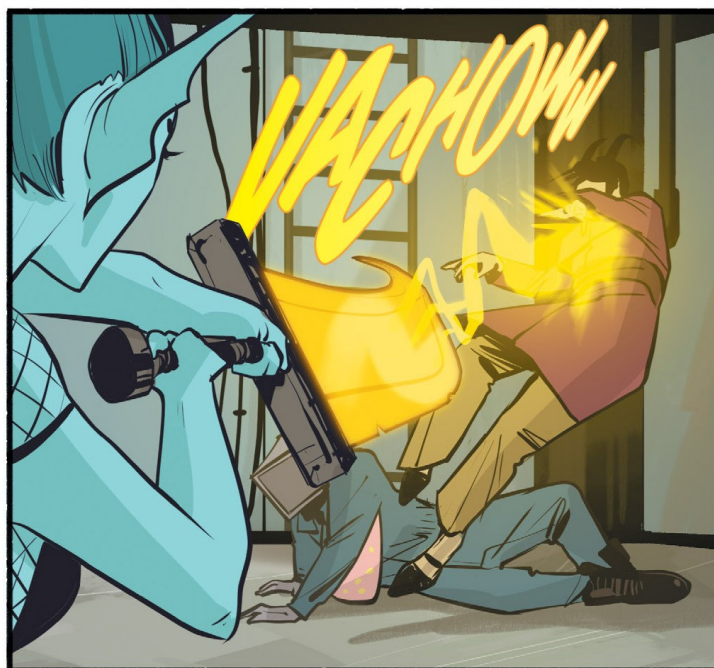


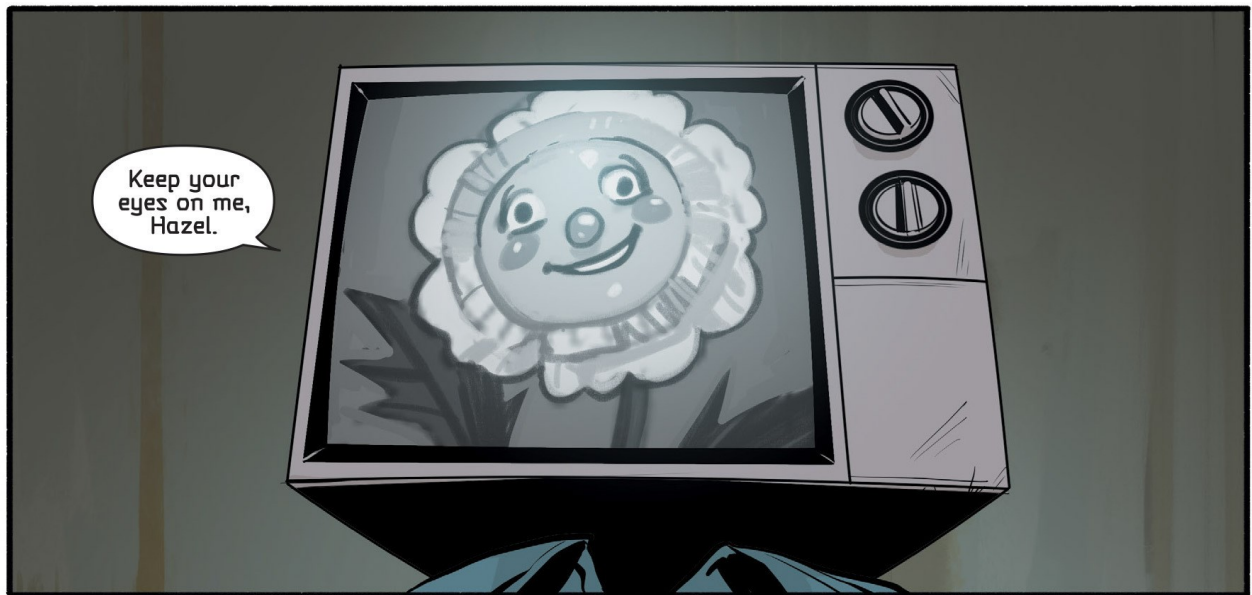


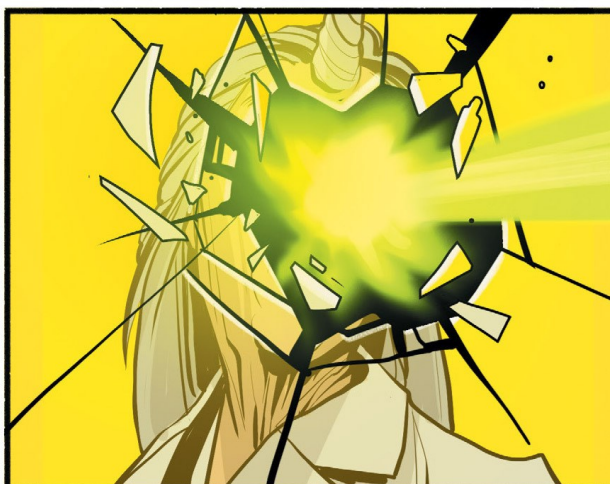




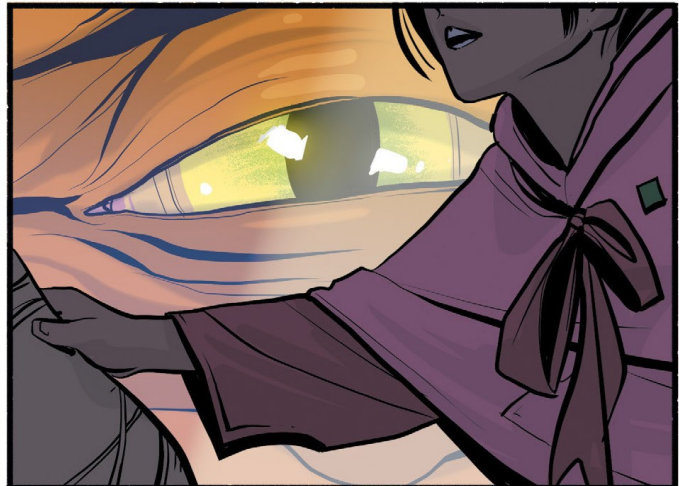






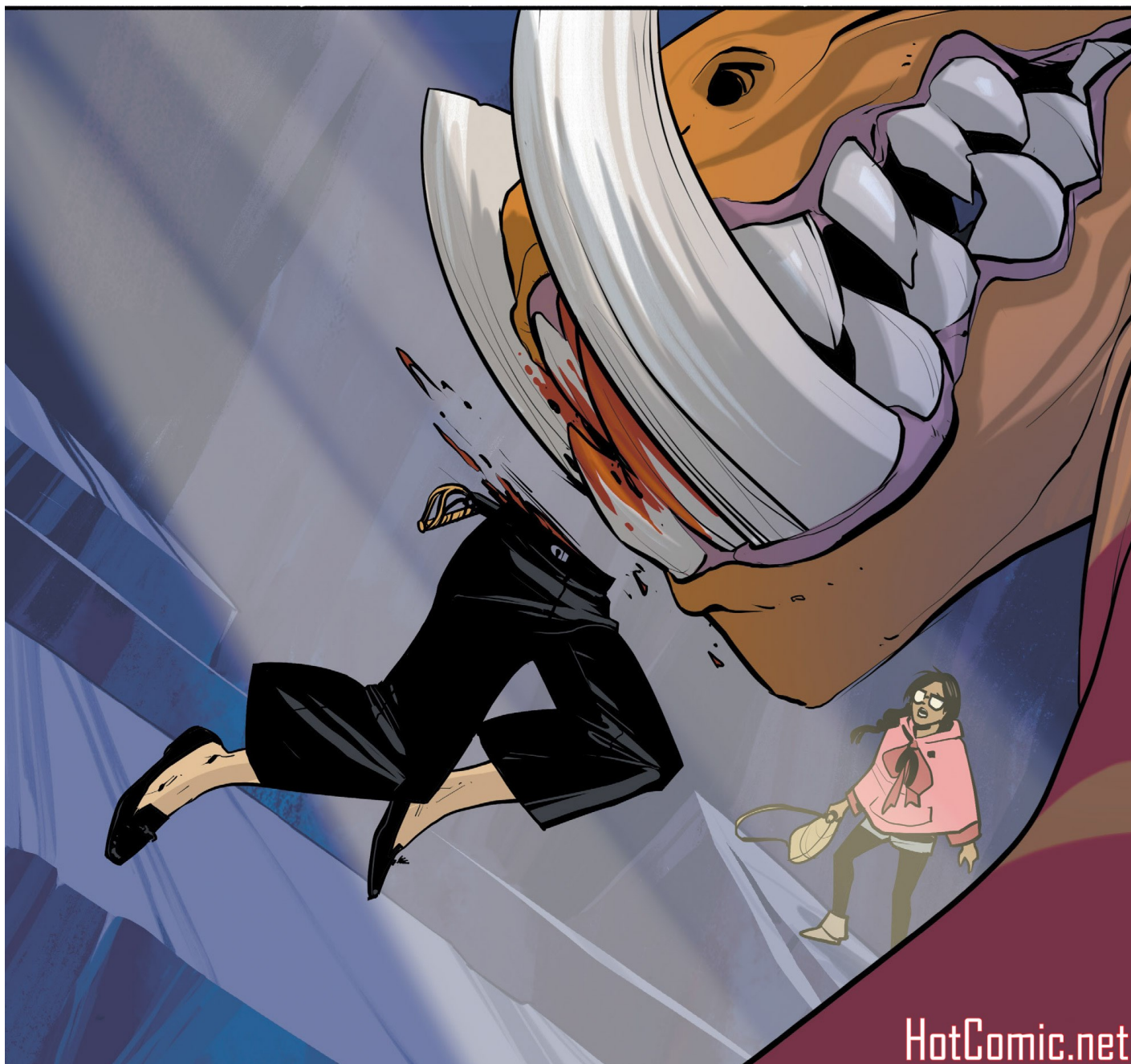


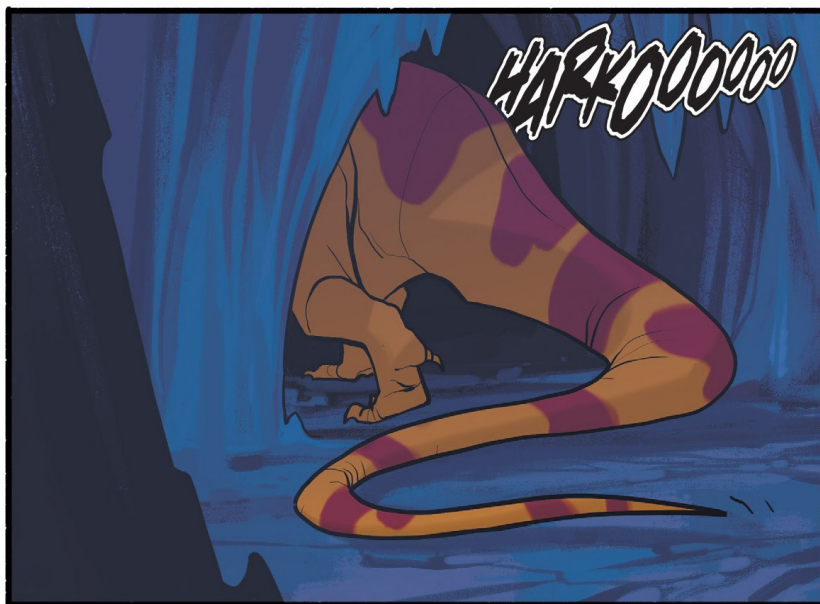






GET THE
HELL AWAY
FROM







TO BE CONTINUED

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Given the graphic contents of this issue, it should probably come as no surprise that our comic is not exactly beloved by some of the more... buttoned-down readers out there, but I was still shocked to learn that *Saga* was one of the American Library Association's "Top Ten Frequently Challenged Books of the Year," especially because one of the reasons we were singled out was for being "anti-family," which I kind of want to use as a blurb on a future collection.

Thankfully, while some library patrons may have challenged the presence of *Saga* on their shelves, because of the heroic librarians of this great nation, our book was never banned or otherwise removed from shelves, for which Fiona and I are both very grateful.

To quote Neil Gaiman from a recent interview in the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund's excellent *Defender*, "I am absolutely, one hundred percent for a parent's right to say, 'I do not want my child reading that.' I am absolutely, one hundred percent against a parent saying, 'I do not want my child reading this, and I do not want any other child reading this.' And those two things are very different."

As a father of two young readers and as a writer who learned everything from being able to check out whatever the hell I wanted to from the Westlake Porter Public Library as a kid, I couldn't agree with that sentiment more, so thanks again to everyone who works to make sure that our filthy book is always available to anyone who wants to read it.

And speaking of our glorious filth, I have to once again praise Fiona for totally outdoing herself with this issue. Her art continues to boggle my mind, particularly knowing that she's somehow been able to balance her work on *Saga* this arc with her additional duties on *Archie*, whose new ongoing series with writer Mark Waid comes out in just a few short weeks. Is this the best the character has looked in seventy-five years or what...?



But Staples isn't the only one two-timing Marko and Alana these days, as I've also got a new book coming out in July, *We Stand On Guard*, with the world-renowned Steve Skroce. I'm disgustingly proud of this action-packed story of a futuristic war between the United States and our neighbor to the north, and Steve and I will be doing two huge signings to support the book the week it comes out:

JULY 1, 2015 • On Canada Day, we'll ironically be appearing in the United States at my old hangout **Meltdown Comics** in Los Angeles.

JULY 4, 2015 • And on the 4th of July, Steve and I will even more ironically head to Canada for a signing at **Golden Age Collectibles** in Vancouver.

But which one will be better attended?! It's Yanks versus Canucks, and whichever country loses will be forced to keep Justin Bieber forever. If you're interested in stopping by, please visit the websites of those two wonderful establishments for times and more details.

We've included some preview pages at the end of this very issue, spectacularly colored by Matt Hollingsworth and masterfully lettered by none other than Fonografiks himself, so please give their hard work a gander, won't you?

Anyway, all of this shameless plugging means we've got a slightly truncated *To Be Continued* this month, so pick us some real winners from the mailbag, Hamburger...

Fiona & Brian,

So, Marko is not only the hottest dude in comics, but he's also packin'! I knew it.

Chuck McKinney
NYC

I think even Marko is feeling inadequate after Fiona's double-page spread this issue, Chuck.

Dear Brian and Fiona,

Not to be fake deep or anything, but what the fuck? I love you guys still, but Chapter Twenty-seven was the first disappointing turn of events, writing wise, I've experienced so far. I'm not even a teetotaler, but I was so happy to finally see Marko portrayed as a character who sticks to his guns, and stays away from substances. It's been so refreshing to see, and I was really bummed when I found out he pulled a complete 180, doing something that totally broke character, in my opinion. It's a lazy trope that I've grown really tired of—using drugs to insert some self-revelation, when usually characters can just grow on their own, or (if you want to save the same amount of time for writing) have successions

of dreams or something. I get that he wanted to “understand” Alana’s actions, but I really think he could have figured out her motivations, and gotten over his passivity, without breaking his personal vows, and it perpetuates this idea that drugs are the best way to reach breakthrough revelations about your life, and accomplish clarity, when it’s simply not true. I still love you guys, still love the comic, and you haven’t lost a reader for this, but I might try to pretend this little part just didn’t happen.

Sincerely,
Alex A.
Chicago, IL

At last, a complaint letter! Thanks for taking the time to share your disappointment in Marko (and us), Alex. I always prefer to let our story speak for itself, but I’ll be curious to hear if the rest of this arc changes the way you look at that issue and Marko’s “passivity.”

Dear Brian and Fiona,

I am writing to you from a beautiful hotel room in Tampa, Florida where I am attending an English teachers’ conference. After delivering a very successful presentation with two of my fellow teachers and celebrating accordingly with great food, coffee, and hand-rolled cigar, I am catching up with To Be Continued.

Before I get too teacher-ish (which is gonna happen pretty quick), I should probably talk for a moment about being a blind guy (relatively speaking) who loves comics—especially Saga. I have a visual impairment called ocular albinism. I am legally blind, have no central vision or depth perception, am very light sensitive, and I do not drive. It is really quite fun being visually impaired. I have a running list of about 442 advantages (nearly top of the list is never being asked to serve as a Designated Driver). Anyway, I started reading comics with a magnifying glass as a kid. Now, I read with some pretty super-powered reading glasses and an even more super-powered closed circuit tv set up. When I started teaching at my current college, my department chair and dean were eager to allow me to use comic books in the classroom. So now, it is time to get teacher-ish...

I teach at a small community college in West Central Ohio. I work with mostly non-traditional students who are returning to the classroom after having started a family, served in the military, entered the workforce, etc. The students I work most closely with have self-selected what we call Developmental Writing courses because they feel a lack of confidence as writers and want help getting their footing. These are students who, if we invest enough of our energy as teachers and they do the same as students, become what I think of as the most dangerous (and most important) people... They end up with the rare mix of life experience and academic theory (or street smarts and book smarts) to make someone like D. Oswald Heist proud (still torn up over that death, but I understand your decision there).

Like so many of your readers, I love your work because you present your characters in such a relatable, human way. Your work is in the forefront of my mind as I prepare to teach a Literature course on The Graphic Novel in the coming Fall Semester at my college. It is our first time offering the course, and I am excited to be able to design and teach it. We will be reading several biographical novels that received critical

acclaim (Maus, Persepolis, Fun Home, and March) as well as Scott McCloud’s Understanding Comics to help readers new to the genre enter the discussion. I also want to devote time to the concept of serialization of story arc, which is exactly why Saga’s appeal comes in, both because of your visual and narrative art and your fans’ call and response in this column. I can’t wait to connect our students with your characters and your readers!

Please accept a copy of the flyer promoting the course as a small but genuine token of a blind teacher’s appreciation for your work.

Thank you,
Jacob King
Lima, OH

Jacob, you’re like a cooler, more inspiring, equally ocularly challenged version of D. Oswald Heist. I’m jealous of all the students who will get to enjoy your course.

Dear Mr. Vaughan,

After being informed by a friend that you had laid the challenge for someone to send in a picture of a tattoo of the wonderful Ghüs, I nearly found myself traveling to my local tattoo shop, prepared to shell out the necessary money to receive my first ever tattoo.

I have nothing against tattoos but I do feel that everyone has them. I don’t need it and I have enough expensive hobbies in my life. Plus, how can I be sure I can commit to something so permanent? I simply cannot. I have too many interests for that.

That leads me to this day of realizing how foolish it would be to get this tattoo. Not only would this break my tattoo virginity, it would also make me spend money that I didn’t even have at the time due to money being owed to me. On top of it, you’re in California, I reside in Florida. If by some best chance it didn’t take weeks for my letter to reach you (it recently took a paycheck three business days to make a five hour trip), how could I be certain someone in Cali didn’t already have this gorgeous piece of work? Then what would I have to show for it? Not to mention having to print out the picture, mailing it that evening, etc.

I write this letter, my first to any comic, because FUCK YOU! Fuck you for your wonderful stories, for your excellent crafting of characters that has affected me on many levels. I was not okay with life and myself post finishing Y: The Last Man. In a fit of rage, I immediately read the next issue of this fine book to be sure Lying Cat’s fate would not be one that shook loose this mortal coil. You’re a heartless piece of shit that continues to toy with emotions.

Ghüs is my current favorite Saga character. I know I also have Fiona Staples to blame for this but she did not put out the challenge, you did. Anyhow, I do love you so much for your incredible works and for giving me the joy of Ghüs, Lying Cat, and Yorick. I have bought so many variations of Saga and will continue to do so as long as you keep being you. If I ever meet you in person, I’ll be more kind than this letter in the same way that you still love your friends after a damn good prank. Anyhow, thanks, I guess...and maybe one day, I’ll get the tattoo anyway because he is pretty flipping awesome!

David Puente
Eustis, FL

David, I'm not sure if these next letters will fill you with regret or deep relief...

Brian K. (+ Hamburger) Vaughan,

When the newest reader survey came out, you pointed out that no one sent in any Saga tattoos and "challenged" someone to send in a picture of their Ghüs tattoo.

Long story short, my husband pointed that out to me since I had just been talking about my love of Ghüs. So naturally I went as fast as I could to my friend and tattoo artist Kaily McKee to fix the problem I had of not having a Ghüs tattoo. She solved my problem and this is my result! I will now always have my own little Ghüs sidekick, and couldn't be happier.

So challenge met!

Dora

Minneapolis, MN



Congratulations, Dora! I can't believe someone actually did it. And while you were the very first person to send us a Ghüs tattoo, I'm stunned to say that you were not the last...

BKV,

I did it! Got a Ghüs jammer! Special prize or what?!?! I also included a copy of my band Haberdasher's EP to check out. I played drums as well as all the audio production on it. Hope you enjoy!

So I noticed that starting with issue 25 you guys started putting Fiona's name first on the cover and inner credits page. I thought this was really interesting and have only seen it elsewhere a few times. What were your intentions in doing so? Just an attempt to share credit as much as possible? I know that this series is very much a 50/50 collaborative effort. Are you guys just gonna trade off?

Thank you both for continuing to make such a killer series!!

Dylan Eggert

Las Vegas, NV



Your ink is as mighty as your EP, Dylan. And yeah, Fiona and I are equal co-creators/co-owners of this book, but she does an unequally large amount of the work, so I finally realized it was stupid for me to automatically receive "first billing" each month just because I'm Word Boy, and we decided to start swapping credit placement every arc. But I still deserve all your ire for whichever plot points you hate, just as Staples still deserves all your love for creating characters like the one now permanently scarred into your flesh.

Fiona Staples & Brian K. Vaughan,

It was love at first sight the moment I laid eyes on Ghüs. Thank you for the adventure you have created. My tattoo was done by Henry Cortez at 4forty4 tattoo in Tucson, AZ.

Cheers from the Old Pueblo,

Katie Lehn

Tucson, AZ



Whoa, that might be my favorite one yet, Katie.

For your borderline insane dedication to an independent comic you'll likely have long forgotten about by the time you're eventually laid to rest with one of its supporting characters still branded on your thigh, Hamburger K. Vaughan will be sending you, Dylan AND Dora each a copy of our increasingly hard to find Deluxe Hardcover, collecting Saga's first eighteen issues, including the inaugural appearance of dear ol' Ghüs himself.

Sorry we didn't have space to run more of your outstanding letters and photos this month, but we'll see you back in here in thirty days for the shocking conclusion to Dengo's latest campaign.

The Last Un-tatted Man,

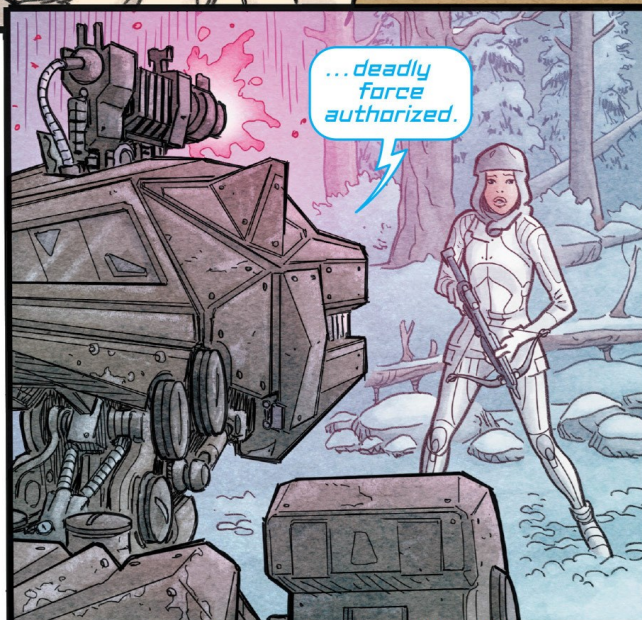
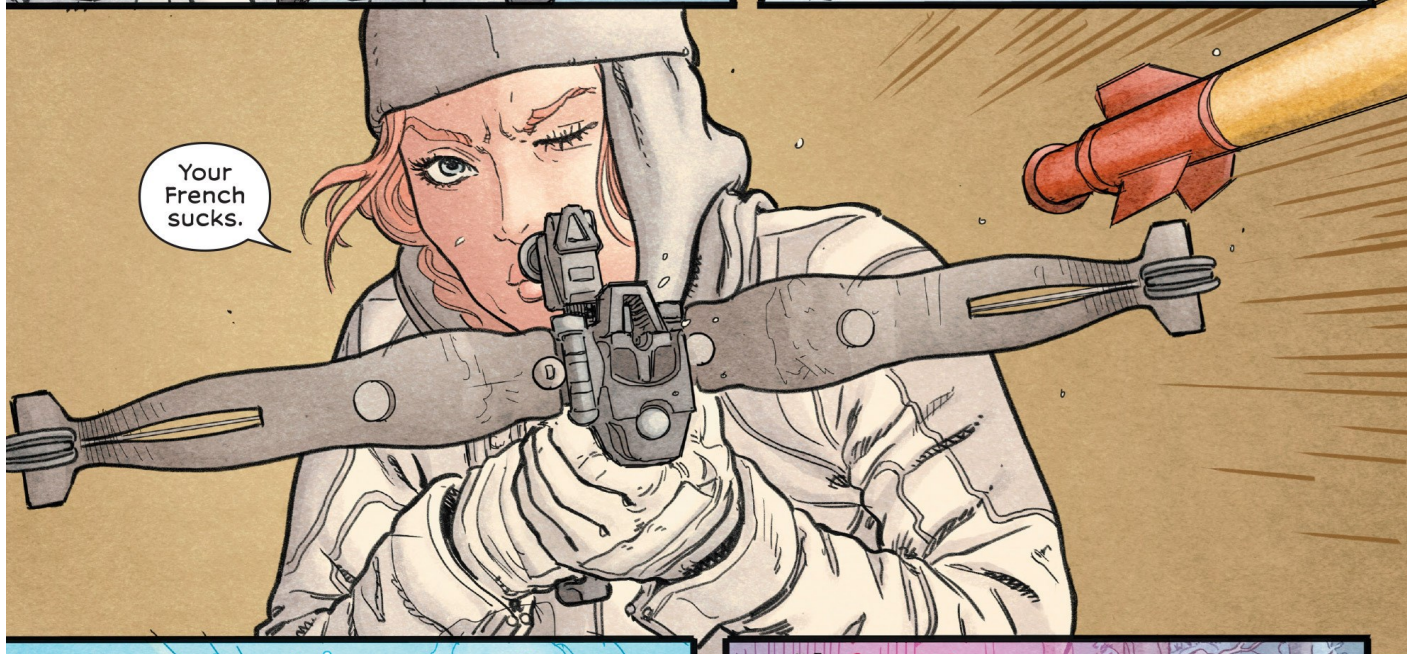
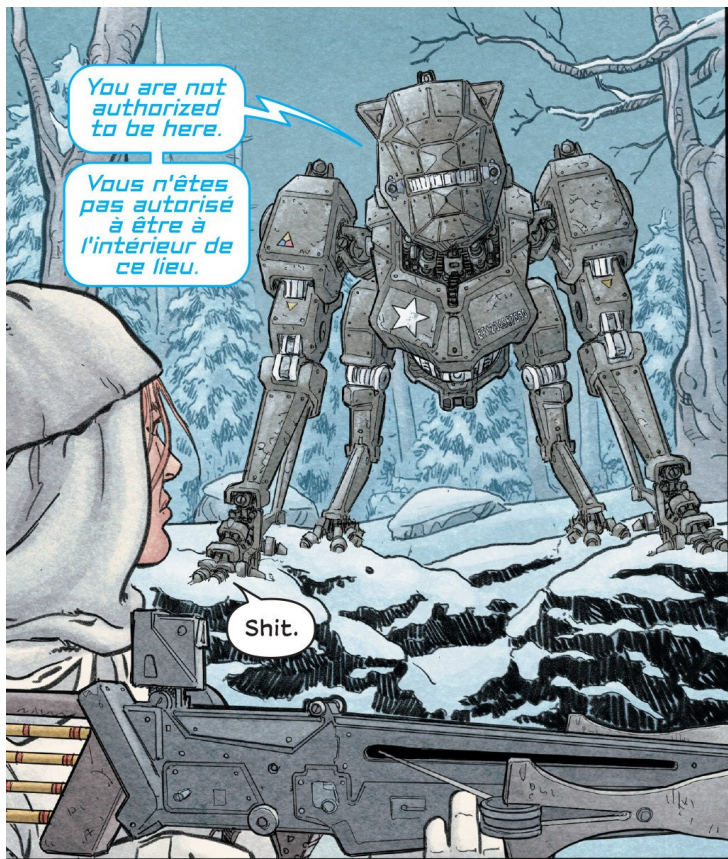
BKV

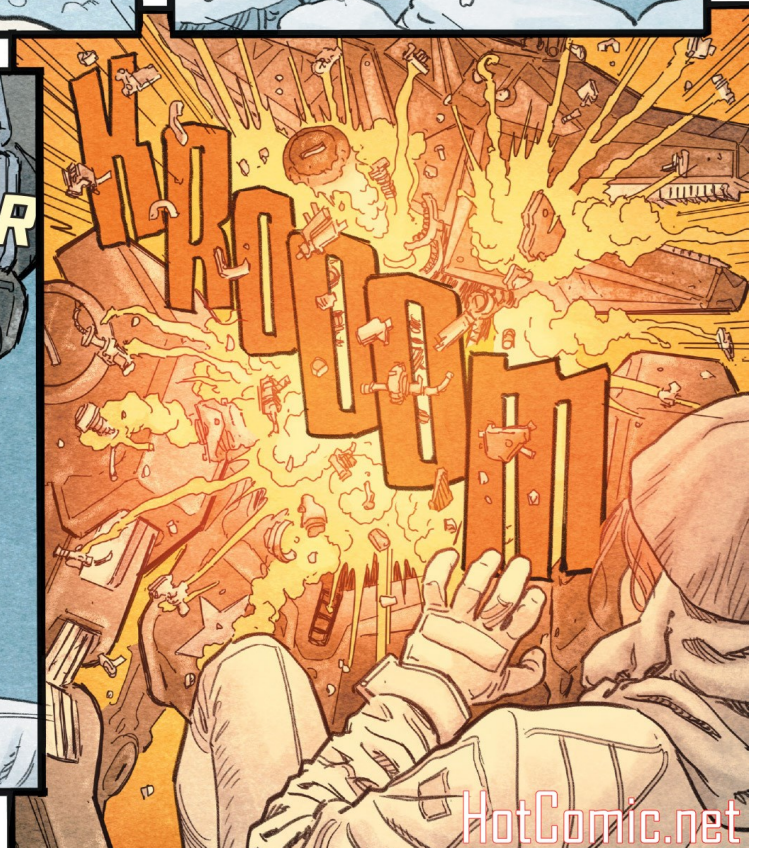
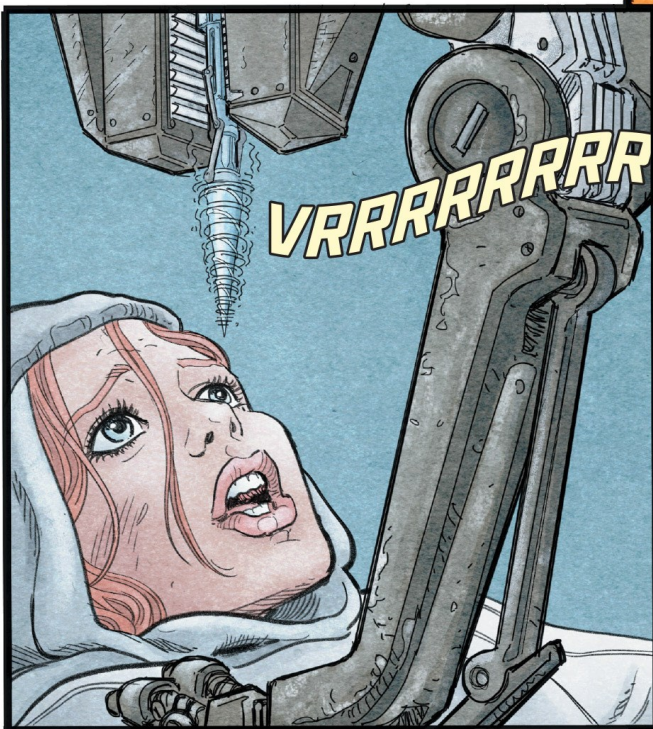
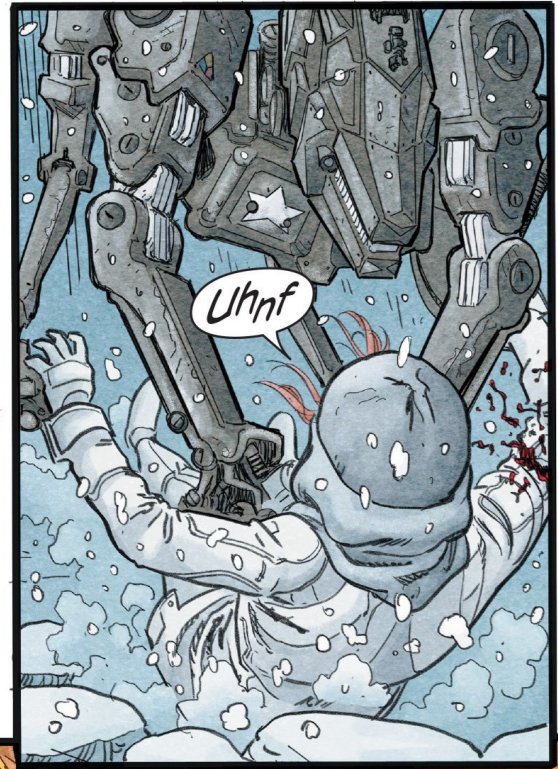
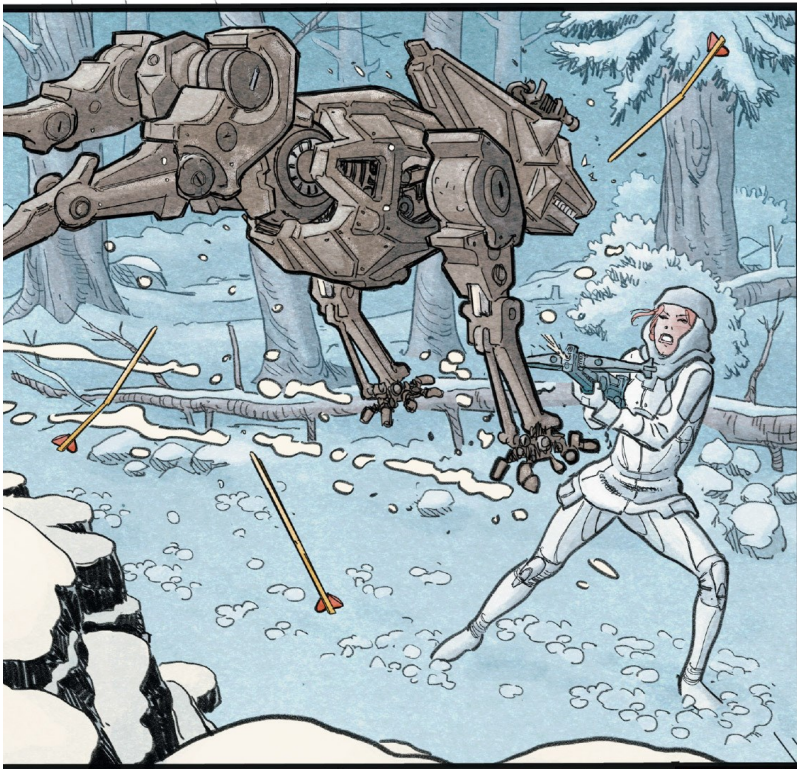
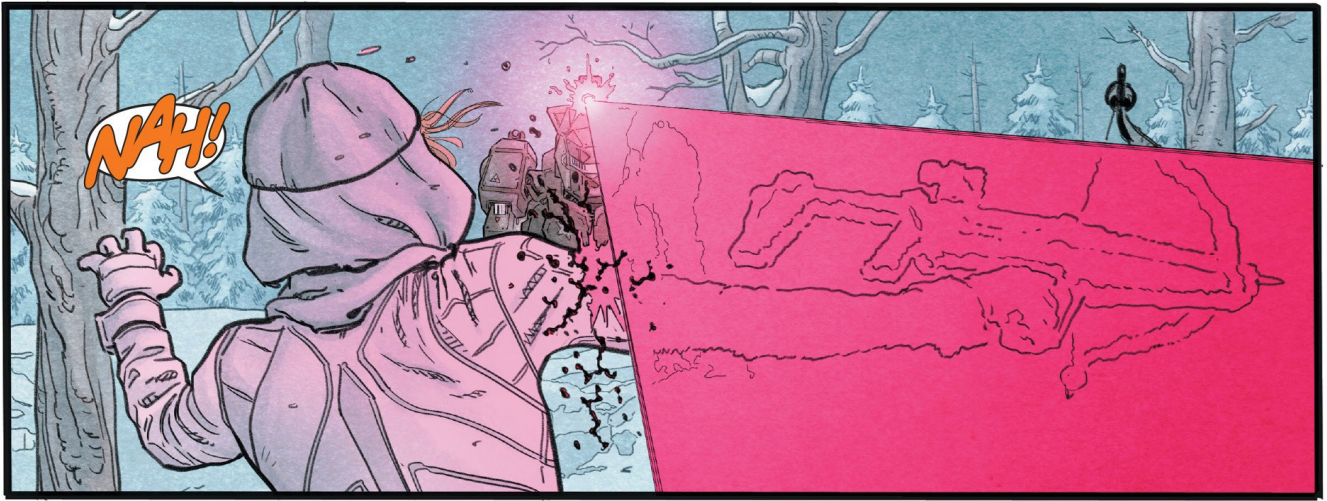
BRIAN K. VAUGHAN  STEVE SKROCE

WE STAND ON GUARD

PREVIEW









Where the hell did you come from?

To be continued in
WE STAND ON GUARD
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